**Dialogue Punctuation**

The following are some of the rules to be used when punctuating dialogue:

**Rule #1 – The punctuation always goes INSIDE the quote.**

Correct: “It’s as plain as the smile on your face,” he said.

Incorrect: “It’s a complicated issue”, he said.

Remember that the dialogue tag (he said) frames the sentence in which it appears.

**Rule #2 – The period always appears AFTER the dialogue tag.**

Correct: “There ought to be a law,” he replied.

Incorrect: “I can’t go out tonight.” she said.

**Rule #3 – Other terminal punctuation appears inside the quotes.**

Examples: “I hate your stinking guts!” she exclaimed.
“Are you sure you’ve never done this before?” he asked.

**OTHER DIALOGUE PUNCTUATION TIPS**

*Terminal punctuation is never followed by a comma.* The following example would be incorrect:

“Didn’t your mother teach you any better?,” she asked.

*When placed in the middle of a quote, the tag becomes a pause, surrounded on either side by quotes.* The following example would be correct:

“I’m worried about the damage to your fingers,” he said, “and the damage we’ve done by slamming them in the car door.”

*If the punctuation tag separates two complete sentences, put a comma after the first sentence and treat the remaining sentence(s) as an individual unit.*

Example: “I don’t like wine,” he said. “I like beer. As far as I’m concerned, wine is just sour grape juice.”